

## A model of speech development and disorders for diagnosis and treatment planning

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The classification and differentiation of pediatric speech sound disorders (SSD) remains controversial. The definitions used in classifying SSD refer to speech production processes, and accordingly intervention methods have been developed aiming at different parts of the speech production process. However, diagnosis in clinical practice is primarily based on behavioral speech symptoms rather than the underlying deficits. In this presentation, we propose a process-oriented approach to diagnosis and treatment planning of SSD, which extends to childhood speech disorders in general, based on three important basic principles:

1. A focus on underlying processing deficits rather than symptoms.
2. A focus on process profiles with degrees of involvement.
3. A focus on changing profiles.

Our model comprises three general diagnostic categories labelled “developmental delay”, “developmental disorder, and” “fluency disorder”. Within these categories, indicative for treatment type, treatment goals are formulated at the level of processes and representations. This process-oriented approach to diagnosis and treatment planning holds important advantages, in that it offers direct leads for treatment aimed at the specific underlying impairment tailored to the specific needs of the individual and adjusted in the course of the speech disorder. The approach is illustrated with a case-example.